

Research Summary

Focus on **Treatment Readiness and Induction Strategies**

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Treatment readiness interventions

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A series of *readiness and induction* interventions developed at TCU incorporate ideas and methodologies not usually emphasized in traditional substance abuse treatment programs. These interventions, created as part of the NIDA-supported [CETOP project](#) (Cognitive Enhancements for the Treatment of Probationers), give participants unique opportunities to define their roles in treatment and to discover their positive personal strengths and hidden cognitive potentials. These early-in-treatment activities are designed

for use in group settings (with up to 35 participants), although they also can be used in individual counseling settings. The interventions provide opportunities for boosting client confidence in personal ability to do positive things while also emphasizing the importance of treatment and the idea that treatment can work. In addition, these readiness and induction strategies allow participants to learn and use techniques, such as mnemonics and visualization, that can enhance learning and benefit

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Readiness and induction manuals

The TCU Readiness and Induction manuals provide substance abuse treatment counselors with instructions for assembling the intervention activities described below. Additional materials such as construction paper, dice, playing pieces, and colored markers are required to complete some of them. The *Tower of Strengths* and *Weekly Planner*

interventions are packaged together in one manual.

Downward Spiral: The Game You Really Do Not Want to Play challenges substance abuse treatment clients to examine the consequences of addiction on themselves and their families. The

See **Readiness and induction manuals**, page 2.

Want More Information?

Further information about the studies and interventions in this summary is available at the IBR Web site: www.ibr.tcu.edu

Got Questions?

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See Page 4 for information about ordering manuals and free downloads from the IBR Website.

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treatment. A common thread among these interventions is the requirement that participants identify the changes and actions they will need to take to get the most from treatment.

The TCU readiness and induction interventions were designed specifically to overcome

problems often encountered in working with a mandated treatment population. As such, these strategies address the distorted and negative expectations about treatment found particularly among clients in criminal justice programs, while at the same time addressing their lack of self-confidence due

to personal failures, educational and vocational difficulties, and poor coping skills.¹ Clinical applications for these interventions are described in user-friendly manuals and continuing research supports their effectiveness in treatment settings. ■

Readiness and induction manuals, continued from page 1.

game is available through an instructional manual that provides step by step directions for creating the game board, game cards, and playing pieces (see **Figure 1**). Realistic scenarios, factual information, and inspirational quotes are interwoven in a game format that resembles the well-known Monopoly.TM Players roll dice to

move across a board filled with potential downfalls related to family, health, friendships, finances, self-esteem, and legal consequences, which are described on game cards that players collect. The objective is to be the last player alive. Throughout the game players lose social support, health, self-concept, and financial resources

due to substance abuse. Just staying “alive” becomes more challenging the longer the player stays in the game. **Downward Spiral** is engaging and non-confrontational, while at the same time thought-provoking and motivational. A **College Edition** of the game, which focuses on alcohol and substance abuse on campus, also is available for use

with non-clinical populations. Both games can lead to useful discussions on substance abuse.

The **Tower of Strengths** uses a simple card sorting task to engage individuals in constructive and positive thinking about themselves and their personal resources (see **Figure 2**). Using 60 cards containing *personal strength* descriptors (e.g., “caring,” “strong,” “hard working”),

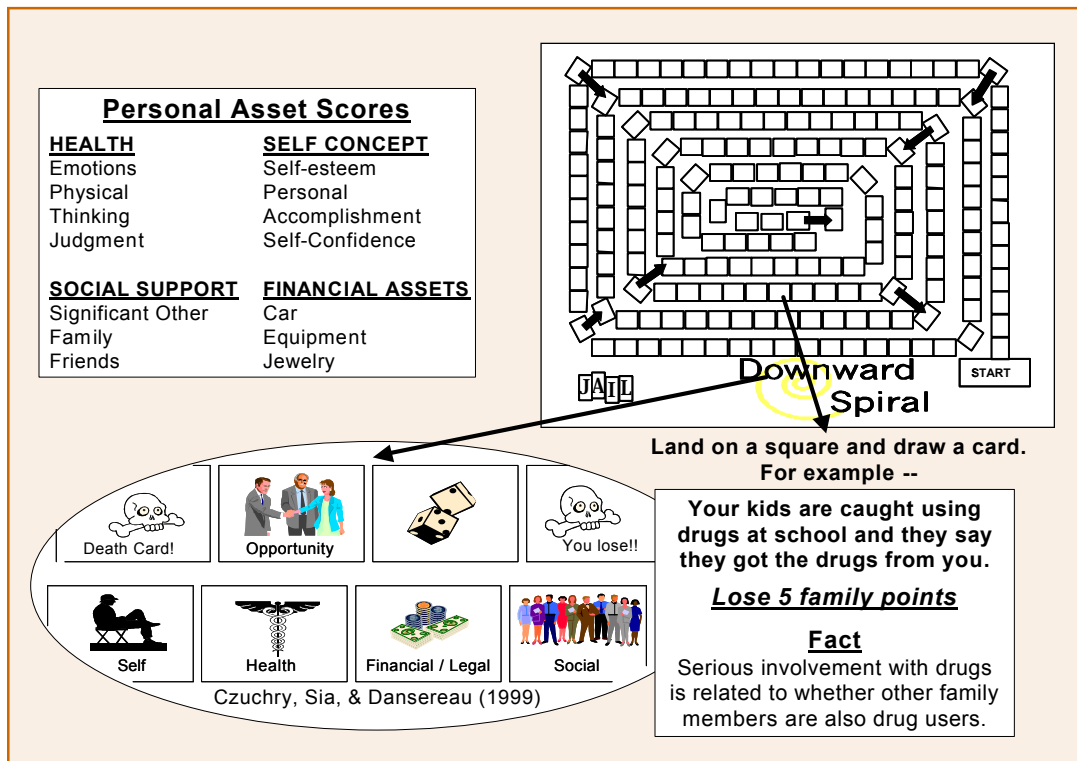


Figure 1. Sample game pieces and components of the **Downward Spiral** game.

Research on treatment readiness strategies

The TCU readiness and induction activities were completed by 253 probationers, randomly assigned to receive these interventions as part of a study of treatment enhancement in a mandated, residential treatment program (built on a modified therapeutic community model). Subjective reaction to these materials was positive, with most probationers indicating they enjoyed the activities and found them helpful. In addition, data collected during

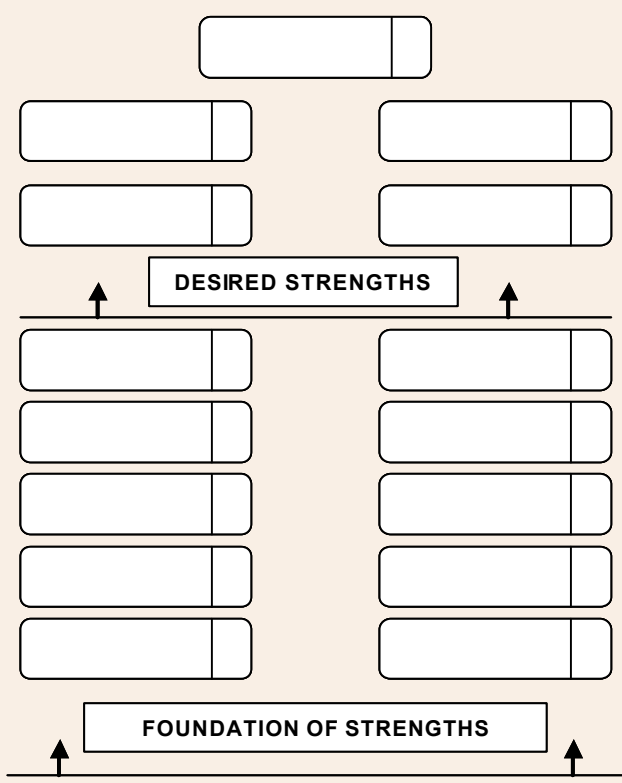
treatment for clients in communities that were randomly assigned to readiness-enhanced or non-enhanced conditions showed that clients who participated in these readiness and induction activities felt their communities were more involved in treatment and more helpful to them,² and were themselves more involved in treatment and more positive about the program and staff.³ In addition, those with less education who received the

enhanced series showed more motivation to participate, greater confidence in the program, and more motivation and confidence related to staying clean in the future.⁴ Similarly, independent evaluations of the *Tower of Strengths* and *Downward Spiral* with college students have found these strategies are effective at modifying attitudes, boosting self-esteem, and intensifying behavioral intentions for positive change.^{5,6,7} ■

a participant chooses the 10 best self-descriptors, plus the 5 descriptors that fall in the desired (“strengths I can attain with work”) category. These are recorded on a worksheet depicting one’s personal *tower*. Each descriptor card falls into one of six categories (social, thinking, health and performance, emotional, motivational, and life view), and participants are asked to analyze their strengths in each category and draw pictures or write a word or phrase to help them remember their strengths. In a 1-hour session, scripted, small group discussions are used following the sorting activity, providing participants with a forum for a positive, upbeat, and motivational look at individual potential.

The *Weekly Planner* generally is used in conjunction with the *Tower of Strengths*. Using a set of 80 quotations and a 7-day *planner* sheet, participants are encouraged to choose quotations that they find motivating and to write them into their planners for each day. They are encouraged to share why they chose the quote and what it means to them. The planner is placed where it can be easily seen and read each day. The quotes provide reminders of personal strengths and potential, and the activity is designed to facilitate constructive thinking and positive feelings about both self and treatment. ■

Tower of Strengths



Put a letter in the small box space: R=red (social)
W=white (thinking) G=green (health) Y=yellow (emotion)
B=blue (motivation) P=purple (life view)

Figure 2. A *Tower of Strengths* worksheet.

References

- ¹ Dees, S. M., & Dansereau, D. F. (1997). *A Jumpstart for Substance Abuse Treatment: Readiness Activities (TCU/CETOP Manual for Counselors)*. Fort Worth, TX: Institute of Behavioral Research, Texas Christian University.
- ² Czuchry, M., & Dansereau, D. F. (2000). Drug abuse treatment in criminal justice settings: Enhancing community engagement and helpfulness. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 26(4), 537-552.
- ³ Sia, T. L., Dansereau, D. F., & Czuchry, M. (2000). Treatment readiness training and probationers' evaluations of substance abuse treatment in a criminal justice setting. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 19, 459-467.
- ⁴ Blankenship, J., Dansereau, D. F., & Simpson, D. D. (1999). Cognitive enhancements of readiness for corrections-based treatment for drug abuse. *The Prison Journal*, 79(4), 431-445.
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- ⁶ Czuchry, M., Sia, T. L., & Dansereau, D. F. (1999). Preventing alcohol abuse: An examination of the *Downward Spiral* game and educational videos. *Journal of Drug Education*, 29(4), 323-335.
- ⁷ Sia, T. L., Czuchry, M., & Dansereau, D. F. (1999). Considering personal strengths: The effect of three methods on mood, arousal, and self-esteem. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 29, 1151-1171. ■

Available treatment readiness manuals

Copies of the printed manuals listed below are available through Lighthouse Institute, a part of Chestnut Health Systems. A charge of \$15 to \$20 per manual, plus postage, covers copying and handling.

Downward Spiral: The Game You Really Don't Want to Play (1998; 184 pp.) M. Czuchry, T. Sia, D. F. Dansereau, & J. Blankenship

Downward Spiral: The Game You Really Don't Want to Play (College Edition) (1998; 182 pp.) M. Czuchry, T. Sia, D. F. Dansereau, & J. Blankenship

Preparation for Change: The Tower of Strengths and the Weekly Planner (1998; 76 pp.) T. Sia, M. Czuchry, D. F. Dansereau, & J. Blankenship

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In addition to purchasing published copies, treatment readiness manuals are available also for downloading as Adobe® Acrobat® PDF files from the *IBR Web site*. See the "[Manuals](#)" section or the "[Downloads](#)" page at <http://www.ibr.tcu.edu>.

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Of related interest, the *DATOS Web site* provides background information and summaries of the most recent findings from the national, multi-site Drug Abuse Treatment Outcomes Studies at: <http://www.datos.org>.

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